

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 02628 160800Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 HA-05 OES-07 NRC-05 DOE-11

SOE-02 EB-08 COME-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /100 W

-----037456 160807Z /17

O 160730Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1820

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE ELECTION AND THE PRESS

1. DURING COURTESY CALL ON PHILIPPINE INFORMATION MINISTER
TATAD I ASKED REGARDING THE POLICY OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT
TOWARD PRESS COVERAGE OF THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION FOR THE
INTERIM BATASAN PAMBANSA (NATIONAL ASSEMBLY). IN REPLY HE
MADE THESE POINTS:

A. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WILL BE WELCOME AND FREE TO MOVE
WHEREVER THEY MAY WISH IN THE COUNTRY DURING THE ELECTION
CAMPAIGN AND THE VOTING. THE MAJOR CONTESTS OF INTEREST WILL
PROBABLY BE IN MANILA AND HE ASSUMES THAT MOST OF THE CORRE-
SPONDENTS WILL WANT TO COVER THE ACTUAL ELECTION IN THE CAPITAL.

B. THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS HAS DECIDED THAT ALL
CANDIDATES WILL HAVE ACCESS ON AN EQUAL TIME BASIS TO RADIO
AND TELEVISION. COSTS OF RADIO AND TELEVISION TIME WILL BE
MET BY THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS.

C. THOSE AMONG THE DETAINEES WHO ARE ACCEPTED AS CANDI-
DATES WILL BE PERMITTED TO TAPE RADIO PRESENTATIONS AND
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TO ISSUE PAMPHLETS. (WE ARE SEEKING TO DETERMINE DEGREE
TO WHICH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO DETAINEE-
CANDIDATES AND WILL ADVISE.)

2. OUR DISCUSSION ALSO COVERED THE PHILIPPINE REACTION
TO RECENT ARTICLES IN THE NEW YORK TIMES AND OTHER
AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO THE WESTINGHOUSE NUCLEAR

POWER PLANT AND ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPER PROFITTING FROM U.S. CCC COMMODITIES. I POINTED OUT THAT THE CONJECTURES OF SOME IN THE PHILIPPINES THAT THIS REPRESENTED A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN TO EMBARRASS THE PHILIPPINES HAD NO BASIS IN FACT. IT SHOULD BE APPRECIATED THAT THE PRINCIPAL TARGETS OF THESE ARTICLES WERE AMERICAN CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS. TATAD SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS FULLY AND HAD SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN THIS TO BOTH PRESIDENT MARCOS AND MRS. MARCOS.

3. ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF PRESS FREEDOM, TATAD POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING THE PRESIDENT'S AGREEMENT THAT NO FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS WOULD BE BANNED OR CENSORED. I SAID I HOPED THIS POLICY COULD CONTINUE IN VIEW OF ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE GENERAL FLOW OF INFORMATION.

4. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION REGARDING LIKELY ISSUES IN THE FORTHCOMING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, HE SAID THAT THE CONTINUATION OF MARTIAL LAW WOULD BE THE PRIMARY ISSUE. OTHER ISSUES WOULD BE QUESTIONS OF CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS. WHEN I ASKED WHETHER THE U.S. BASES WOULD BECOME AN ISSUE, HE SAID HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD GET MORE THAN PASSING ATTENTION.
NEWSOM

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